

High Uintas

September is best month to fish in mountain lakes, where choices abound

By Ray Grass
Deseret News outdoor writer

HIGH UINTAS — Fishermen have it made here. The lakes are candy stores to those with rod and reel. If one lake doesn't whet their appetite, another over the next ridge might, or the one on the next terrace, or the small lake over the boulder field and up the drift. One lake is bound to be attractive.

There are, for fishermen, nearly 650 lakes in the Uintas to choose from. That's how many are managed, which means they have fish, planted or naturally produced. Some have brook trout, others cutthroat, some both. A few have golden trout and there are even some with arctic grayling.

Biologists check these lakes periodically for population size for future planting needs and then duly recognize each lake (see accompany story) as accessible and fishable.

The choices are limitless, the fishing opportunities as good as there are, and all this wrapped in a setting as close to untouched wilderness as country nowadays can get.

And while some believe fishing is waning, the more familiar, an-

glers know the best fishing month is still ahead — September. That's when the temperatures are cooler and the fish more active. It's also one of the most bug-free months. Bothersome mosquitoes are only bad memories.

And yet, there is not a large shifting of fishing pressure to the high country. In fact, if anything, it goes down. School, vacations, decreased interest, a used-up tackle box, or fall football, whatever the reason . . . September in the Uintas is not crowded.

Roger Wilson, fisheries biologist for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, says it's a time when fishermen can have a little solitude, "and not have to walk very far."

According to Wilson, most of the fish in the Uinta lakes are brook trout. The reason, he says, "is the brook can just out-compete the cutthroat and rainbow. Grayling are better at competing. We plant 100 brook per surface acre of water. With cutthroat we have to plant 250 per surface acre.

"One reason for the brooks success is we plant 3-inch brooks in June. The cutthroat haven't even spawned by then. The cutthroat we plant in August when they're about one and a quarter inches."

In both cases, he adds, it takes about two years of growing time before the fish are considered keepers by fishermen.

He warns, however, that people

Ray Grass and fisheries biologist Roger Wilson are reflected in Lake Uinta.

PHOTOGRAPHY/ TOM SMART

Please see UINTAS on D2

UINTAS

Continued from D1

fishing the High Uintas should not expect to catch big fish. Why?

"The high mountain lakes are just not as productive. The growing season is shorter, for one reason, and for another there are not the nutrients in the higher lakes that are in the lakes at lower elevations," he says.

Trout in the 6- to 8-inch range are keepers in the Uintas. Large fish, in the 13- to 14-inch range, are prizes.

Stocking these lakes isn't easy. The road-side lakes, by far the most popular lakes, are the easiest to reach and get the largest fish. Catchables, fish between 6 and 8 inches, are planted in some lakes, like Mirror, about every two weeks.

Lakes where fish trucks cannot go get their fish by air. Wilson says frequency ranges between one and six years, "depending on natural production and pressure.

"That's why it's a good idea to fish around. One lake may have the smaller fish planted a year or so ago, while another lake may have the larger fish planted three to four years ago."

Planes fly low over the lakes and drop fish from holding tanks. Fish, he notes, larger than 3 inches have a poor survival rate when dropped because of their large size.

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Continued from D1

their free-basing cocaine and shooting machine guns on campus, whether they're true or not.

What's hard to figure is why the nation's media has come down so hard on the book.

A columnist in Colorado writes that Bosworth's "antics are overdone and tasteless." A columnist in Texas — Bosworth's home state — questions his sanity. And in *The Sporting News*, columnist Art Spander wonders what an egomaniac is doing diving into the literary world.

"This book is one for the ages, the ages from 8 to 12," writes Spander. He says

in smaller fish. We do know that the project works and works well, so we believe the survival rate is high," he adds.

The lakes causing biologist the biggest problem are those accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles, but not by fish truck. These lakes, he says, get the pressure, but not the larger catchables they need.

"People call us up all the time, though, wanting to know if we planted a certain lake. In most cases it doesn't do them any good. Like I said, it's usually two years before they show up in the creeks," he continues.

There is also a problem with fishermen grouping up, fishing the lakes most easily reached like Mirror, Teapot, Tadpole, Lilly, Moosehorn and Pass.

Then there are lakes like Anchor, Seiclner, Cutthroat, Gilbert, Henrys Fork, Sawmill, Ball and Ryder that could use more pressure. These lakes have stunting problems because of too many fish.

In fishing the High Uintas there are recommended rules to follow. Temperatures can change quickly, so fishermen should make sure they take along adequate clothing. Wool clothing is suggested. Also, rain gear can be very useful.

Don't travel cross-country unless you are familiar with the area or carry a good map and know how to read it.

Don't drink the water. There are lakes in the Uintas where the Giardia parasite

Bosworth is using the book as a vehicle to shout, "Look at me. I can paint my hair orange. I can get drunk. I can use dirty words."

"I can use dirty words, too," writes Spander. "Here's one: Bosworth."

That's too cutting to be witty. What is witty is Bosworth's book. He says things in there you wish you'd have said.

Most people go through life thinking up great lines after the fact. Only hours later, when you're in the shower, do you come up with the perfect comeback to the guy who took your parking space.

But Brian Bosworth, in his book, comes up, time after time, with the perfect retort.

He is funny. He is entertaining. He is witty. He even says stupid things — about his weird haircut, for instance, — that still have you laughing out loud.



A friendly chipmunk takes a few sunflower seeds during a lunch break.

has been discovered. The best protection is to boil all drinking water for three to five minutes before drinking.

When camping, leave the area as you found it. Carry out all garbage, scatter firewood and ashes, and replace rocks used for a fire ring.

When traveling by horseback, picket the horse between two trees during the day and hobble them at night. Do not haul in hay or straw and don't leave horses tied to trees for long periods. Horses can kill

the trees and trample down vegetation.

Parties going into the Uintas are limited to 15 people and 20 horses, except in the Granddaddy, Four Lakes and Naturalist Basin areas where parties are limited to 12 people and 15 horses.

As for fishing, there are no special regulations. The limit is eight and fishermen can use lures, flies or baits. Fish caught can be taken home, or as many chose to do, cooked in cracker crumbs, butter and lemon on the spot.

The reason for all this is Rick Reilly, the writer who collaborated with The Boz on "The Boz." A lot of the time, in these celebrity-tells-all books, the job of the collaborator is basically to arrange the celebrity's words into coherent sentences and paragraphs. Reilly, a writer at *Sports Illustrated*, goes well beyond that. He has Bosworth talking like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

You can imagine Bosworth when he read his words after Reilly got through with them. "Yeah," he says to himself, "that's what I meant to say."

For an example, here is how Bosworth describes sports writers: "There's a difference between writers and reporters . . . Reporters are short fat 'wanna-be's.' They wanna-be players or they wanna-be coaches and they can't, so all they do is rip . . . Most columnists are just wanna-be's

with their picture in the paper. Columnists are people who have an opinion on everything and don't know jack about what they're talking about. Most reporters are guys who would interview a widow before anybody had told her that her husband is dead . . . Writers, on the other hand, are cool. Writers are professionals. For one thing, they can write — unlike reporters, who think they can but instead just turn out columns of phlegm. For another thing, writers don't look like Oscar Madison from 'The Odd Couple.' Some of them actually dress decently. For a third thing, they treat you like a professional."

Bosworth — and Reilly — ought to get credit for writing a book that is actually enjoyable to read. You don't have to agree with what he says to still want to defend his right to be entertaining — and produce something that isn't mostly phlegm.

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